

Wednesday 24th September 2014

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, HITCHIN TOWN 2
(FA YOUTH CUP – 1ST QUALIFYING ROUND)

The Blues' youngsters can consider themselves unlucky to have exited the FA Youth Cup when they lost by the odd goal in three to Hitchin Town at the ProKit UK Stadium. They conceded what appeared to be two own goals from corners in the space of a few minutes either side of the interval and despite hitting the woodwork twice and having an attempt at goal headed off the line could only net a penalty late on for all their efforts.

Stortford made a good start and within two minutes Mason Naylor collecting a pass from Ben Smith on the right ran on goal only to see his shot hit the outside of the near post with keeper William Hunt beaten.

Striker Jamie Powter twice went close – once with a shot and once with a header that Hunt saved and the keeper also stopped an effort from Ben Smith.

Blues stopper Cameron Robson had saved earlier in the half from the Canaries' Charlie Black but had little to do so that it was very much against the run of play when the visitors took the lead in the first minute of added time at the end of the half. Josh Warner's corner was flicked on by Black at the near post and the ball seemed to come off a Blues defender and then hit the underside of the bar. The ball bounced down near the line and Referee Douglas Lawson awarded a goal (0-1).

Half time: 0-1

Hitchin extended their lead in the 51st minute again following a Josh Warner corner from the right. The ball was bundled over the line and it was unclear who had put the ball in the net although it seemed to be another own goal (0-2).

Stortford pushed forward strongly and at one point forced three successive corners. With twenty minutes left a Mason Naylor corner dropped loose in the area and Bryn Thorpe hit the post with a shot. Then two minutes later from a corner taken by Ben James a header from Ben Smith was headed clear off the goal-line.

It seemed that the Blues were not going to score but they had a lifeline with two minutes of normal time left with Sean Clare being brought down in the area by Hitchin central defender Vince Birchill. **SEAN CLARE**

took the resultant penalty himself and made no mistake from the spot (1-2).

There was five minutes of added time and in the final minute Clare was unlucky not to bring the tie to extra time when he watched his shot from 15 yards roll agonisingly a foot wide of an upright.

Full time: 1-2

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Cameron Robson; Louis Monk; James Baughurst (sub – Rene Leacock 61 mins); Sean Clare; Bryn Thorpe; Alex Askri; Mason Naylor (sub – Arun Melville 79 mins); Danny Palmer (sub – Jordan Handscomb 79 mins); Jamie Powter; Ben James; Ben Smith.
Unused substitutes: Alex Warman and Jack Jones

Attendance 92